



## A Guide to Recycling Plastics



*Confused about what can and can't be recycled...and why? You're not alone! This information sheet explains the rules of plastics recycling in Frederick County with basic information on the manufacturing and recycling process.*

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There are many types of plastic used in manufacturing; different types are suited for different product applications. This means that our homes are filled with a wide variety of plastic products—many of which are recyclable, but not all. Some plastics do not recycle well and others have little or no market for resale.

The plastics industry has developed identification codes to label different kinds of plastic. The identification system divides plastic into seven distinct categories and uses number codes which can generally be found on the bottom of containers. More information on plastic types and their uses can be found in the chart on the other side of this page. Examples of identification codes are:









Frederick County uses a single stream recycling system, which means residents do not have to sort any recyclables at home, including different kinds of plastic. All you need to know to recycle plastic materials is what is accepted by our program and what the basic guidelines are:

- **All containers must be empty!** They do not have to be spotlessly clean, however, partially full containers will be rejected from the recycling process and become trash.
- **No thin, brittle plastics.** The more “crunchy” the plastic, the less recyclable it is. This includes “clamshell” containers (the clear, hinged containers that strawberries or muffins are often sold in) as well as clear, brittle take-out and deli containers or even thin, disposable drinking cups (like picnic cups.)
- **The only bags that are accepted for recycling are those that have a code of #2 or #4** printed on them, such as grocery store bags. This means no sandwich bags or any other bags without a code printed on them.
- **No styrofoam!** When possible avoid buying products with this packaging—and ask retailers, restaurants and manufacturers to use the readily-available alternative materials.
- **Plastics without an identification code imprinted on them are not recyclable.** (The other side of this page has more information on the plastic types and identification codes.) No code, no recycling!
- **No plastic items that are too large** to fit in a standard-sized recycling cart are accepted for *curbside* recycling at this time. These items can be brought to the Bulky Plastics drop off site at the Reichs Ford Road recycling facilities (9031 Reichs Ford Road in Frederick.)
- **When in doubt, throw it out!** Non-recyclable trash reduces the value of your recyclable items and can contaminate the re-manufacturing process.

After your recyclables are collected curbside they are shipped to sorting facilities and material markets where they are usually sorted by type in order to be recycled, since each type has different properties and melts at a different temperature. You can help keep the costs of collection, sorting and reprocessing down and keep the value of the plastic high by recycling only those types of plastic that are currently accepted for recycling. The chart on the other side of this page shows how plastics are used in recycling and manufacturing processes.

***If you have any questions about what can be recycled, or about the recycling program in general, please call the Frederick County Office of Recycling at 301-600-2960, between 7:30am and 4:30pm, Monday through Friday.***

Type of Plastic	Examples of What is Acceptable for Recycling	NOT Acceptable for Recycling	It Gets Made Into...
 <b>PET</b> <b>polyethylene terephthalate</b> <i>It's tough and shatterproof.</i>	Peanut butter jars.  Narrow-neck containers, such as for detergents, mouth wash, salad dressing, vitamins, soda and water bottles.	Thin, brittle plastics and "clamshell" packaging—often used to hold items such as strawberries, baked goods such as muffins, or salad bar meal containers.	Bottles, carpeting, tennis balls, insulation for jackets, t-shirts, paint brushes.
 <b>HDPE</b> <b>high density polyethylene</b> <i>It's flexible and often translucent.</i>	Milk and water jugs, juice bottles, dairy tubs such as whipped topping or sour cream, liquid detergent bottles, medicine bottles, kitty litter jugs, plastic grocery bags.	Materials made from Tyvek, such as envelopes and protective gear.	Plastic lumber, detergent and bleach bottles, trash cans, buckets, toys, traffic barriers, fly swatters.
 <b>PVC</b> <b>polyvinyl chloride</b> <i>It's tough and chemical resistant.</i>	Bottles for shampoo, cooking oil, salad dressing.	PVC pipes, lawn furniture or objects too large to fit in a recycling cart (these items can be brought to the specially designated recycling bin at the DSWM facilities, 9031 Reichs Ford Rd.)	Floor mats, mud flaps, pipes, hoses, computer and electric cord wraps.
 <b>LDPE</b> <b>low density polyethylene</b> <i>It's flexible and tough.</i>	Food storage containers, dairy container lids, bags newspapers are delivered in, dry cleaning bags.	Bags without a plastic identification number printed on them.	Garbage can liners, frisbees, plastic lumber, lawn furniture, toys.
 <b>PP</b> <b>polypropylene</b> <i>It's chemical and heat resistant.</i>	Medicine bottles, deli containers, yogurt containers, rigid/reuseable plastic cups, nursery plant packs and pots.	Thin, brittle #5 plastics, such as disposable plates and drinking cups. Polypropylene fabrics.	Brooms, lawn mower wheels, ice scrapers, paint buckets, toothbrushes. Spun fiber fabrics and filling for coats, sleeping bags and blankets.
 <b>PS</b> <b>polystyrene</b> <i>It's brittle and see-through OR soft opaque foam.</i>	Dairy containers, medicine and vitamin bottles, flower pots.	Disposable foam hot/cold beverage cups, carry-out containers, foam egg cartons, disposable plates, packing peanuts, anything styrofoam.	Building insulation, flower pots, CD cases and sleeves, rulers, trash cans, food service trays.
 <b>OTHER</b> <b>other plastics</b>	Bottles such as for ketchup, syrup, window cleaner, 5-gallon water coolers.	Objects too large to fit in a recycling cart, and in general, objects without an identification code imprinted on them.	Street signs, pens, concrete supports, ice scrapers.